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CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

1. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

   requesting a password from a basic input-output system (BIOS) during a

   boot sequence of a device, after loading an operating system

   kernel;

   receiving the password; and

   unlocking a hard drive with the password.

2. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

   executing an initialization component in the operating system kernel; and

   loading a plurality of drivers.

3. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

   determining whether the hard drive is locked;

   wherein requesting the password from the basic input-output system

   (BIOS) is performed after determining the hard drive is locked.

4. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the operating system
   kernel is loaded from a flash memory.

5. (Original) The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

   freezing a lock mechanism to prevent tampering with security parameters.

6. (Currently amended) The method as recited in claim 2 1, wherein the
   plurality of drivers include integrated device electronics (IDE) drivers.

7. (Currently amended) A system, comprising:

   a processor;

   a hard drive coupled to the processor;

   an operating system to execute on the processor;

   a basic input-output system (BIOS) to execute on the processor;

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a password stored in the basic input-output system (BIOS) to unlock the

hard drive; and

a driver to execute from the operating system on the processor and to call

the basic input-output system (BIOS) to retrieve the password

during a boot sequence of the system, after a kernel of the

operating system is loaded.

8.　(Original) The system as recited in claim 7, further comprising:

a chassis intrusion mechanism to alternate between a secure mode and a

maintenance mode;

wherein the hard drive remains password protected in both the secure

mode and the maintenance mode.

9.　(Original) The system as recited in claim 7, wherein the password is a

serial number.

10.　(Original) The system as recited in claim 7, wherein the password is

encrypted.

11.　(Currently amended) A machine-accessible medium having associated

content capable of directing the machine to perform a method during a boot

sequence of the machine, the method comprising:

receiving, by a basic input-output system (BIOS), a hard drive password

request from an operating system after a kernel of the operating

system is loaded during the boot sequence;

determining, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), if a system is in a

maintenance mode;

retrieving, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), a password, when the

system is not in a maintenance mode;

encrypting, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), the password; and

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passing, by the basic input-output system (BIOS), the encrypted password
to the operating system.

12. (Original) The machine-accessible medium as recited in claim 11, further comprising:

requesting, by an integrated device electronics (IDE) driver, the password;

receiving, by the integrated device electronics (IDE) driver, the encrypted password;

wherein the integrated device electronics (IDE) driver is part of the operating system.

13. (Original) The machine-accessible medium as recited in claim 11, wherein the password is a system serial number.

14. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

determining, by an operating system, that a hard drive is locked, the operating system having a kernel loaded during a boot sequence;

receiving, by the operating system, a password from a basic input-output system (BIOS), the password received after the kernel of the operating system is loaded; and

unlocking, by the operating system, the hard drive using the password.

15. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising:

determining, by the operating system, if the password is valid;

wherein unlocking, by the operating system, the hard drive is performed only if the password is valid.

16. (Original) The method as recited in claim 14, further comprising:

freezing, by the operating system, a lock mechanism for the hard drive.

17. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:

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executing a basic input-output system (BIOS);

loading an operating system kernel;

executing the operating system kernel;

loading at least one integrated device electronics (IDE) driver;

querying a hard drive to determine if the hard drive is locked;

if the hard drive is locked, querying the basic input-output system (BIOS)

for a password after the operating system kernel is loaded and

executed;

returning the password from the basic input-output system (BIOS) to the

at least one integrated device electronics (IDE) driver; and

unlocking the hard drive.

18.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:

accessing the basic input-output system (BIOS) from the operating system

kernel through a system interrupt.

19.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, further comprising:

initializing the hard drive, after unlocking the hard drive.

20.   (Original) The method as recited in claim 18, wherein loading an

operating system kernel further comprises the computer system loads the

operating system kernel in less than approximately three seconds.

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